

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An audio playback apparatus comprising:
a sound source storing folders, wherein at least one of the folders includes albums, and at least one of the albums includes music files, and wherein the folders, the albums, and the music files are arranged in a hierarchical manner;
playback unit specification means for specifying a shuffle unit as any one of a folder, an album, and a music file, for use in selecting music file groups;
music file group selection means for randomly selecting a music file group in accordance with the shuffle unit;
means for specifying a shuffle range;
means for randomly selecting a next music file group from within the shuffle range, wherein the next music file group comprises at least two music files; and
playback means for randomly reproducing the music files included in the selected music file group before reproducing music files included in the next music file group.
2. (Cancelled).
3. (Previously Presented) The audio playback apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

album selection means for randomly selecting an album from the selected music file group, if the playback unit specification means specifies the folder; wherein the playback means reproduces the music files for each selected album.

4-5. (Cancelled).

6. (Previously Presented) The audio playback apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the playback means sequentially reproduces the music files included in the selected music file group in the order of their recording.

7. (Cancelled).

8. (Currently Amended) An audio playback apparatus comprising:
a sound source storing folders, wherein at least one of the folders includes albums, and at least one of the albums includes music files, and wherein the folders, the albums, and the music files are arranged in a hierarchical order;
album selection means for randomly selecting one of the albums to be reproduced from the sound source;
means for specifying a shuffle range;
means for randomly selecting a next album from within the shuffle range; and
playback means for randomly reproducing the music files in the selected album before reproducing music files in the next album.

9. (Currently Amended) An audio playback apparatus comprising:

a sound source storing folders, wherein at least one of the folders includes albums, and at least one of the albums includes music files, and wherein the folders, the albums, and the music files are arranged in a hierarchical manner;

folder selection means for randomly selecting one of the folders to be reproduced from the sound source;

means for specifying a shuffle range;

means for randomly selecting a next folder from within the shuffle range; and

playback means for randomly reproducing the music files in the selected folder before reproducing music files in the next folder.

10. (Currently Amended) An audio playback method comprising the steps of:

specifying, in a sound source, a shuffle unit as any one of a folder, an album, and a music file, for use in selecting music file groups,

wherein the sound source stores folders, at least one of the folders including albums, and at least one of the albums including music files, and wherein the folders, the albums, and the music files are arranged in a hierarchical manner;

randomly selecting a music file group in accordance with the shuffle unit;

specifying a shuffle range;

randomly selecting, by a processor, a next music file group from within the shuffle range, wherein the next music file group comprises at least two music files; and

randomly reproducing the music files included in the selected music file group before reproducing music files included in the next music file group.

11.-12. (Cancelled).

13. (Previously Presented) The audio playback method according to claim 10, further comprising the step of:

randomly selecting one of the albums from the selected music file group if a folder is specified in the playback unit specification step;

wherein the playback step reproduces music files for each selected album.

14. (Currently Amended) A computer readable media storing a computer program that causes a processor to perform a method, the method comprising:

specifying, in a sound source, a shuffle unit as any one of a folder, an album, and a music file, for use in selecting music file groups,

wherein the sound source stores folders, at least one of the folders including albums, and at least one of the albums including music files, and wherein the folders, the albums, and the music files are arranged in a hierarchical manner;

randomly selecting a music file group in accordance with the shuffle unit;

specifying a shuffle range;

randomly selecting a next music file group from within the shuffle range, wherein the next music file group comprises at least two music files; and

randomly reproducing the music files included in the selected music file group before reproducing music files included in the next music file group.

15. (Cancelled).

16. (Previously Presented) The media according to claim 14, wherein the method further comprises:

randomly selecting an album from the selected music file group if a folder is specified by said playback unit specification function;

wherein the playback function reproduces music files for each selected album.

17. (Previously Presented) The audio playback apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

mode selection means for selecting a first or second reproducing mode through a user interface, wherein the first reproducing mode allows for random playback on an album basis and the second reproducing mode allows for random playback on an individual music file basis.

18. (Previously Presented) The audio playback apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a touch screen user interface.

19. (Previously Presented) The audio playback method according to claim 10, further comprising:

selecting a first or second reproducing mode through a user interface, wherein the first reproducing mode allows for random playback on an album basis and the second reproducing mode allows for random playback on an individual music file basis.

20. (Previously Presented) The audio playback method according to claim 10, further comprising:

receiving a user input by a touch screen.

21. (Previously Presented) The audio playback apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the shuffle range is selected by a user, and wherein:

if the shuffle range is selected as all, then the next music file group is selected randomly from among all areas of the sound source;

if the shuffle range is selected as folder, then the next music file group is selected randomly from among a current folder of the music file group; and

if the shuffle range is selected as album, then the next music file group is selected randomly from among a current album of the music file group.

22. (Previously Presented) The audio playback method according to claim 10, wherein the shuffle range is selected by a user, and wherein:

if the shuffle range is selected as all, then the next music file group is selected randomly from among all areas of the sound source;

if the shuffle range is selected as folder, then the next music file group is selected randomly from among a current folder of the music file group; and

if the shuffle range is selected as album, then the next music file group is selected randomly from among a current album of the music file group.

23. (Currently Amended) An audio playback apparatus comprising:

a sound source configured to store folders, wherein at least one of the folders includes albums, and at least one of the albums includes music files, and wherein the folders, the albums, and the music files are arranged in a hierarchical manner;

a user interface configured to receive a user input, the user input comprising a shuffle unit as any one of a folder, an album, and a music file, for use in selecting music file groups, the user input also comprising a shuffle range;

a system control unit configured to randomly select a music file group in accordance with the shuffle unit, and randomly select a next music file group from within the shuffle range, wherein the next music file group comprises at least two music files; and

an output unit configured to randomly reproduce the music files included in the selected music file group before reproducing music files included in the next music file group.